

DISCUSSION.

THOUGHT AND THINGS.

Professor Moore's remarks upon my book of the above title in the March BULLETIN lead me to make certain explanations. I shall refer also to criticisms made by others.

The treatment in my book is a compromise between two methods (as suggested by Professor Russell in the *Journ. of Philos.*). I find it impossible to treat each genetic 'mode' in turn exhaustively, by a method that tries to make out longitudinal 'progressions.' For each topic, a certain before-and-after review is necessary, in order to get the movement of consciousness; and this inevitably requires some repetition and restatement of the main characters of the mode in the interest of the particular problem under investigation. So it becomes a question, in order to reach the most effective exposition, of reducing the retracing to the minimum, without at the same time going over to a barren analytic and structural point of view.

To illustrate: in the second volume I find it impossible to discuss the linguistic embodiment of thought genetically without recurring to the general movement of development of thought, which has already been depicted in earlier chapters.¹

As to the use of new terms — on that point, I simply take up any glove the critic may see fit to throw down. It all depends on whether the conceptions worked out are worth naming, and have not been named before (granting of course the relative appropriateness of the terms suggested). In this matter, it hardly behooves me to anticipate the verdict of the public; but the opinion of the *Nation's* reviewer is this: "The vocabulary of well-considered new technical terms that this volume expounds is in itself a precious gift to psychological investigation. For with each of these new terms there goes a valuable new conception." This is by C. S. Peirce, whose opinion is of the highest.

As to the 'static absolute' I don't care for it — and who isn't tired of it? — because it is a purely logical resort, reached as a presupposition of an equally 'static' truth. But as to a 'dynamic relative' — to suggest a contrast term — that sounds just now fresh and very modern; certainly it is less hackneyed than the other. But when we look it in

I cite this instance since the chapter on 'Thought and Language' is to be printed in the PSYCHOLOGICAL REVIEW for May, and may be glanced at by the reader.

the face, what is its complexion? It is a postulate of a *practical dualism*, as *crassly unintelligible* as the other is *logically over-theoretical*. I can't rest content with a 'dynamic' that has nothing outside to move it and no reason inside for moving! If experience proceeds by readjusting to situations, whence comes the situation that 'puts it up' to it to readjust? Why does it grow discontent with its own habit-world? Is a discrete unintelligible dynamic any better than a contentless formal static? To kick where there are no pricks may satisfy a strenuous 'relative,' but beyond endangering our collections of precious antique china, its only result is to strain its own leg-tendons! I'll stake the whole business on Professor Moore's answer to the following two questions:

First, how can experience of the dynamic-relative type secure or utilize knowledge that is socially valid, without at the same time reinstating other things as valid as the social fellows, including the thinker himself?

Second, how can an experience that has no environment save its own habit, and no reality save its present function, get up any 'dynamic' at all?

Or to put these two questions in one: In what sense is the will of the mother spanking the child part of the habit of the child, and why does the child's experience take on this particular phase of 'relative dynamic'? — this occasional and very disconcerting phase of habit?

The 'relative dynamic' is all right in its place; but so is the relative 'static.' To be 'relative,' we must be *dualistic*, *realistic*, and — 'things are what they seem' becomes the motto of a 'radical empirical' pluralism.

My own view, to be argued fully enough in my later volumes, is that the æsthetic is a mode of experience that not only reconciles these dualisms and pluralisms, *content-wise — in a cross-section* — but also continues its mediation *progression-wise, longitudinally*: so that we can fairly say that in it experience has a way of finding its dynamics intelligible as a truthful and so far static meaning, and also of acting upon its established truths as immediate and so far dynamic satisfactions. In short, our relativisms are contrast-meanings, dualisms, instrumentalities one to another, and the mediation and abolishing of these contrasts, dualisms, means to ends, removes the relativities and gives the only tenable 'absolute.' This is the sort of 'absolute' experience is competent to reach. If you ask why this does not develop again into new relativities, I answer, *in fact* it does; but *in meaning* it does not. For the meaning is the universal of all such cases of media-

tion. If the mediation effected in the æsthetic is one of *typical meaning everywhere in the progression of mental 'dynamic,'* then it is just its value that it discounts in advance any new demands for mediation which new dualisms may make. The æsthetic is absolute then in the only sense that the term can mean anything: it is *universal progression-wise, as well as content or relation-wise.* It mediates the *genetic dynamogenies as well as the static dualisms.*

The following brief explanations are relevant to certain of Professor Moore's difficulties.

As to 'meaning,' I hold that after meaning arises as over against mere present content, then the content also of necessity and by contrast also becomes meaning; since then consciousness may intend or mean either, or the difference between the two. As I put it in the book, with the rise of meaning there arise *meanings* (in the plural). To hold a content to just its bare presence is to make it a meaning — after consciousness is once able to *mean 'that only and not anything else.'*

As to the distinction between 'general' and 'schematic,' between 'belief' and 'assumption' — that is the radical position of my entire work, and I am glad to have it called attention to. It connects with and carries further the 'assumption' theory of Meinong and the Austrian school. My second volume rests its interpretations directly upon this distinction. To say that 'schematic' meaning, 'assumption,' is not 'general,' nor 'universal,' nor 'particular,' nor 'singular' — all of which I do say — is to say that it is a mode of meaning *sui generis.* It is the *intent of question,* assumption, hypothesis, prospective reading — over against all the other meanings just mentioned, which are those of *belief,* acceptance, retrospective reading, proof. It means that the instrumental intent of a meaning is *not a general meaning, but goes before it.* A meaning can be instrumental *only to a general not yet reached.* And a 'general' meaning, when made instrumental to further discovery, is then not general, but becomes in turn again 'schematic.'

So far from being antagonistic to an instrumental view, this furnishes the clue to it. On this distinction, *and this alone* — one destined I think to prove the most fruitful in the epistemology of modern times — the logical processes can be construed as essentially experimental from start to finish. This is the attempt of my second volume, which is now in press.

In respect to 'effort' and the 'subject,' I do not resort to any hypothesis of 'activity' in a philosophical sense. I find that, for the 'knower' himself, the sense of effort — whatever its mechanism¹

¹ The kinæsthetic theory is most likely, to me.

distributed variously as 'efforts' here and there, gets *segregated in a sense of control* which is the 'self' of judgment.

As to the 'inwardness' of thoughts — I hold that as thoughts they are in a context of reflection, recognized and intended as such; but that there is always that belief-reference which acknowledges or assumes the original control-sphere. I reflect alike on 'serpents' and 'sea-serpents,' but any intelligible use of them as meanings presupposes the reference to their respective existence spheres. This reference is for me the essence of 'truth' as meaning. The serpent idea is 'true' when referred to the proper sphere, and so is the sea-serpent idea. There is always the *matching of experiences* as between *what is true* and what the true *is true to*.

One other point. While saying that the entire world of objects of experience or reflection is such to a self or subject, and is also referred to its original control, which 'holds the entire system to its moorings,' I mean two things besides. First, the original control, the 'moorings,' to which each idea or object of reflection is referred, is itself *the experienced* or made-up set of meanings of that original mode — as the reference of the idea 'horse' to the perceptual horse-experience — the envelope of the developing psychic process *being nowhere ruptured*.¹ The controls, 'foreign' as well as 'inner,' are all psychic meanings. And second, the dualism of controls does, as Mr. Moore suggests, live to the last within the sphere of logical meanings; it will not down; the dualism of reflection itself is a redistribution, *not a mediation*, of the control factors. But my conclusion from this is not a dualistic one, and not one of intellectualism; but one of a-logicism. For the failure of the logical to mediate its own and the earlier dualisms is just the opportunity of a genuine mediating experience. The necessity of logic is the opportunity of æsthetic. It is the cry of embarrassment of logical finality, on the one hand, and of pragmatic relativity, with its cruder dualisms, on the other hand, that has rung down the passages of history, and inspired the various solutions of immediacy, all the way from the logical postulates of pure identity, to the affectivist postulates of mystical contemplation. However ineffective these historical 'immediacies' may have proved, they have recurred and will still recur. My own effort is to find out just what is universal and saving in this recurrent endeavor, seeing that genetic analysis shows the endeavor to be inevitable.

J. MARK BALDWIN.

¹ It is however an envelope of inter-psychic or common, in no sense private meaning, as I argue in detail in the forthcoming Vol. II.